Outlines: Tool for planning and adjusting the organization of an essay before writing a draft

**Basic Structure** (visible from Journal 4)

I. Problem in the present

II. Solution

For now, do not include an introduction or conclusion in your outline.

**Expanded Structure**

Insert URLs for sources underneath the points

I. Development of the problem

A. Main variable traced over time

Sources

B. Pick according to chronological order: another variable for a comparison; a proposal in the past for a solution; an event that caused the variable to dramatically change; the formation of a social movement; etc.

Sources under each paragraph

C., D., etc. Pick according to chronological order: the implementation of a solution in the past; an objection to the solution in the past; an event that caused the variable to dramatically change; the formation of a social movement; an effect of an event in the previous paragraph; other steps, based on your specific topic, in the development of the problem

Sources under each paragraph

You will likely have several paragraphs about previous attempts to solve the problem. The structure of these paragraphs will probably involve the following steps, each of which will probably require a paragraph in order to fully develop:

X1. Previous proposal introduced

X2. Predicted benefits of proposed change

X3. Predicted harm of proposed change

X4. Change adopted

X5. Results of implementing the change

XX. Story in chronological order

Sources under each paragraph

II. Proposal that addresses the problem in the present that accounts for solutions implemented in the past (Restatement of thesis)

A. Limitation and/or objection

In many cases you will be addressing objections that you presented earlier because someone had made the objection in the past.

Alternative Guidance for Creating Outlines

Common structure for argumentative essays (visible from timed writing exams, placement tests):

Introduction: Proposal

A. Arguments against

B. Arguments for

C. Discussion

Conclusion: Clarify position

Aspects of this structure:

No indication of where arguments come from

No data in discussion

Research is not necessary

Transformation of common structure into a researched-based argumentative essay:

Introduction: New Proposal

Main variable(s)

Old proposal

Arguments-for in the past (B)

Arguments-against in the past (A)

Adoption or rejection of proposal

Results of previous proposal

Aspects of this structure:

 Data: main variable[s], results

 Proposal that you know has had support from others

 References to people who have made arguments in the past

Many essays will follow this pattern, which is more complex than the transformation above:

Main variable(s)

Proposal in the past (possibly in another location)

Arguments-for in the past (B)

Arguments-against in the past (A)

Adoption of P1

Results of P1

Proposal 2 in the past (more likely in another location)

Arguments-for P2 in the past (B)

Arguments-against P2 in the past (A)

Adoption of P2

Results of P2

Problem in the present (summing up)

Part II: New proposal